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Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2613, LEBANON: SAMIR JA'JA URGES FULL HIZBALLAH

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BEIRUT2613	2006-08-14 12:33	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Embassy Beirut

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 002613

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2016
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: SAMIR JA'JA URGES FULL HIZBALLAH
DISARMAMENT NOW

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason 1.4(d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) During an August 12 meeting with Ambassador and poloff at the Embassy, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Ja'Ja' urged that the debate on full Hizballah disarmament should not be postponed, and that internal and external pressure should be applied to "squeeze" Hizballah on this issue. Ja'ja suggested that reconstruction of the South and the promise of a solution to the Shebaa Farms issue would help in pushing for full disarmament. Concerned that the passage of Resolution 1701 might unleash a new wave of assassinations in Lebanon, specifically of members of the March 14 movement, Ja'ja' urged that the special tribunal of international character to try suspects in the Hariri assassination be established as soon as possible to keep the Syrians off-balance. Keen as ever to be rid of Emile Lahoud as president, Ja'ja' is not confident of gaining Speaker Berri's all-important support until Hizballah is disarmed. Ja'ja' also agrees with having an effective oversight mechanism to control arms smuggling at points of entry. End Summary.

GET HIZBALLAH TO AGREE TO DISARM FULLY

¶2. (C) Having made the two-hour descent to Beirut from his Mount Lebanon redoubt of Bcharre to meet with March 14 allies, including PM Siniora and Saad Hariri, Ja'ja' stopped in at the Embassy on the evening of August 12. Nursing a glass of milk, his preferred beverage, Ja'ja' urged that UNSCR 1701 should not be implemented piecemeal, but as a whole. Far from battered and beaten, Hizballah is in a "good mood" and will not agree to full disarmament now without some pressure. Ja'ja' warned that no one should count on the Shi'a turning against Hizballah following the conflict, since their allegiance to Hizballah has an "historical, ideological, philosophical depth." He believes that Hizballah, even if it moves north of the Litani, will use the post-ceasefire period to "rest, refuel, and replenish its ammunition and rockets."

¶3. (C) Full Hizballah disarmament throughout Lebanon should be on the table for discussion now, Ja'ja' argued, but PM Siniora intends only to concentrate on disarming militias south of the Litani. "Siniora is afraid. He wants to take it step-by-step. He thinks that when Hizballah leaves the South, it will no longer have a raison d'etre." Ja'ja' thinks that an armed Hizballah in the Biqa' Valley and northern Lebanon would be just as dangerous as in the South. Whistling through his teeth and shaking his head, Ja'ja' warned that such a situation would simply lead to another war in "one or two years' time."

¶4. (C) Ja'ja' said that Hizballah's Cabinet ministers, Trad Hamadeh and Mohammad Fneish, need to be "squeezed" in order to get their "political decision" to hand over all of the group's weapons. acknowledging that the chances of achieving this are slim, Ja'ja' said that several March 14 members -- including Marwan Hamadeh, Nayla Mouawad, Joseph Sarkis, Michel Pharaon, Pierre Gemayel, and Ghazi Aridi -- nevertheless intend to raise the issue of full disarmament during the Cabinet discussions surrounding UNSCR 1701.

¶5. (C/NF) Ja'ja' also suggested that the international community has a role to play. Referring to OP 10 of UNSCR 1701, which calls on SYG Annan to present proposals for implementing the Taif Accords and UNSCRs 1559 and 1680 to the Security Council within 30 days, Ja'ja' said that these UN proposals should focus primarily on full militia disarmament (Comment. Annan could also raise this in his initial report

to the Council, called for in OP17. End comment). He asked for USG support in "stiffening Kofi's backbone" on this issue. Annan should not leave the disarmament requirement "diluted", and should get the GOL to present a "week-by-week plan" for disarming Hizballah. Annan should also tell Siniora that UNSCR 1701 is a "take it or break it" resolution, stressing that without a GOL plan for full disarmament of Hizballah, he will not be prepared to deploy a UNIFIL-plus force to the South.

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16. (C) Ja'ja' added that there need to be "sweeteners" for the Shi'a. Firstly, the Shebaa Farms issue should be linked with total Hizballah disarmament. Annan should tell Siniora that Shebaa will not be placed under UN trusteeship until such time as Hizballah fully disarms. Secondly, the international community should back the GOL in providing for the one million mostly-Shia IDPs and undertaking the full reconstruction of the South.

FIRST HIZBALLAH, THEN LAHOUD

17. (C) Ja'ja' said that full Hizballah disarmament is also the key to getting rid of President Emile Lahoud. Saying that Hizballah has "more or less" infiltrated the army, Ja'ja' added that the way to gain control of the army is through removing Lahoud. However, Nabih Berri is still beholden to Hizballah, at least as long as Hizballah is armed, and so will not be able to lend his critical support to a Lahoud ouster until he feels strong enough to act independently of Hizballah and Syria. The Ambassador asked why Berri would not simply do the reverse and support Lahoud's removal as a way to weaken Hizballah and Syria. Ja'ja' responded that Berri doesn't think that far into the future. "He thinks only day-by-day. He doesn't consider thinking that removing Lahoud would weaken Hizballah and strengthen him." He urged again that the first order must be to disarm and weaken Hizballah, and only then would Berri choose to support Lahoud's ouster. Ja'ja' noted that Batroun Maronite MP Boutros Harb, a friend of Berri's and a member of the March 14 movement, could prove a compromise candidate to replace Lahoud.

SMUGGLING CONTROL

18. (C) Ja'ja' supports establishing an effective monitoring mechanism to check arms smuggling at points of entry into Lebanon, and suggested that UNIFIL erect control points along the border with Syria. He lamented that the arms embargo does not explicitly come under Chapter VII in the resolution. He said he would press PM Siniora to either allow international oversight, particularly at ports and airports, or to "fire the airport and port management and get people we have faith in." Ja'ja' remarked though that control of the Lebanese-Syrian frontier revolved again around Hizballah disarmament, since the GOL could only take control of the border with Syria once it has control of the army, which it could only attain through Lahoud's removal.

THREAT OF ASSASSINATIONS

19. (C) As in the periods following the Hizballah/Syrian/Iranian setbacks of UNSCR 1559 in September 2004 and the Cedar Revolution in March/April 2005, Ja'ja' sees the possibility of a "new wave" of retaliatory assassinations, specifically against leaders from the March 14 movement. He urged that notice be served so that Syria and Iran do not begin picking off their opponents in Lebanon, particularly by moving quickly to establish a tribunal to try suspects in the assassination of Rafik Hariri. He also suggested that the USG and others tell the SARG "via backchannel" to "stay away from the Lebanese." (Note. In this context, an editorial in an August 14 Hizballah-aligned newspaper describing March 14 Ministers Nayla Moawad, Marwan

Hamadeh, and Pierre Gemayel as traitors and members of the Israeli "Golani Brigade" being directed by the U.S. Ambassador are particularly worrisome. End note)

COMMENT

110. (C) Ja'ja's central point is clear: Hizballah's arms are at the root of all that ails Lebanon. While we agree that we should engage the United Nations, and specifically SYG Annan, to press the GOL to come up with a plan for the full disarmament of Hizballah, this disarmament should not necessarily presage a Lebanese consensus to oust Lahoud or the extension of effective GOL monitoring over points of

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entry. With the Cabinet currently at odds over Hizballah's weapons merely being moved north of the Litani, it will be a challenge to convince the other Lebanese to compel Hizballah at this time to agree to disarm entirely, as Ja'ja' suggests.
FELTMAN